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Situation Analysis of Primary Education in Almora District

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GIRI INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Sector O, Aliganj Housing Scheme

Lucknow 226 020

1994

**SITUATION ANALYSIS OF PRIMARY
EDUCATION IN ALMORA DISTRICT**



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PREFACE

Education has universally been accepted as an important instrument for achieving not only economic development but also a just and humane society. Ever since Independence we have been striving to provide education to the vast masses of our people. The progress has been tardy, especially in Uttar Pradesh. While Kerala has made noteworthy achievements in this sphere, Uttar Pradesh still has a long way to go. As compared to the All India literacy rate of 52.21 per cent and the Kerala rate of 89.81 per cent, the literacy rate in U.P. in 1991 was only 41.60 per cent. Female literacy rate was even lower - 25.31 per cent.

The government is committed to universalisation of primary education and Education for All by 2000 AD. As part of the effort for achieving Education for All by 2000 AD, UNICEF has identified Almora as one of the districts where a project for this purpose is to be launched. Before the formulation of the project it was considered desirable to take stock of the educational situation since this would facilitate the drawing up of appropriate strategies to achieve the goal of EFA. In this connection the Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow was asked to prepare *Situation Analysis of Primary Education in Almora*. This report is a result of that effort.

This study could not have been completed without the active cooperation of a number of persons and agencies. We, therefore, wish to express our deep sense of gratitude towards them all.

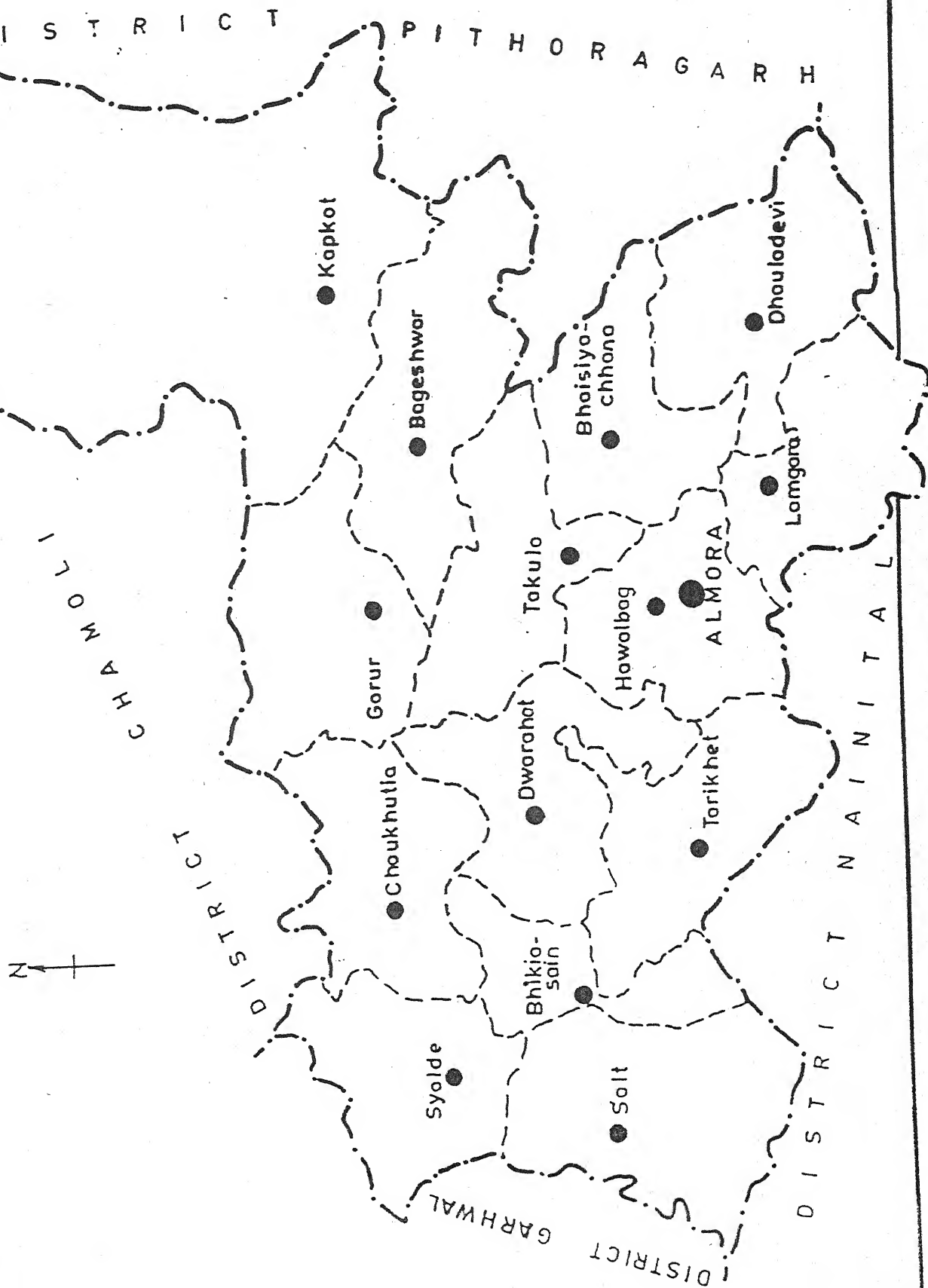
In particular we wish to thank Shri R.K. Singh, District Magistrate, Almora and the Chairman of the District Management Group for reposing confidence in the Institute in asking us to prepare this Situation Analysis and providing the necessary financial and other support. We also wish to place on record our gratitude to the Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Almora and his team of dedicated staff, including the SDIs with whom we have been interacting regularly since the inception of the study. They not only provided us the necessary secondary data but also extended their full cooperation in the course of the field visits undertaken by us. Our thanks also go to Mr AKM Kamaluddin, Project Officer, Education, UNICEF, Lucknow for his valued guidance, inspiration and cooperation at every stage of the preparation of this report.

At the Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow Mr B.S. Koranga extended invaluable help in collecting primary data and in the codification, tabulation and analysis of data; and Mr Manoharan K ably handled the work of word processing. To both of them we extend our grateful thanks.

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DISTRICT ALMORA



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Background

This report makes an attempt at the analysis of the present status of primary education in Almora district, in order to identify key areas of intervention in the proposed project for UPE/EFA to be implemented in the district with UNICEF assistance. Almora situated in the hill region of Uttar Pradesh has been among the educationally developed districts of Uttar Pradesh. According to the 1991 Census the literacy rates in the district : 58.66 per cent total, 79.96 per cent male and 39.60 per cent female were significantly higher than the corresponding figures at the state level; 41.60 per cent, 55.73 per cent and 25.31 per cent respectively. Yet, in spite of this the fact remains that even now over 40 per cent of the total population and 60 per cent of the female population remains illiterate. Hence the urgency of the need for spreading education on a large scale (and not mere literacy) cannot be overemphasized. Unless this happens the goal of education for all by 2000 AD will remain unrealised.

In the district, primary schooling has been the responsibility mainly of the State Government. However,

during recent years, various private individuals, trusts, voluntary organisations have also been active in providing primary education, particularly in the urban areas and other areas which are well-served by roads, communication and other basic infrastructural facilities. Early childhood care and education (ECCE) and other forms of pre-school learning are generally provided either by the official programme of ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme) or by Non-Government Organisations through their Balwadis. The private Balwadis and Nursery schools attempt to prepare children for entry into the formal school system at the level of Class I. The Aanganwadis run under the ICDS programme are also designed to provide pre-school education prior to the child's entry into the formal school system. In practice, it is generally found that they have tended to ignore the educational component of early childhood care.

The involvement of private agencies and individuals in primary education has resulted in the setting up of a variety of English medium as well as Hindi medium schools. However, it is generally found that there are significant variations in the curriculum, methods of teaching, availability of learning materials, ability and basic qualifications of teachers, remuneration paid to teachers, other routine and school activities between the Government and Non-Government Schools. Variations exist even among Non-Government Schools run by different agencies/individuals. By and large, the

Government's emphasis on uniformity among all educational institutions run by it tends to minimise differences within this category.

The present situation analysis is restricted to the analysis of the government-run primary school system through the medium of the Basic Shiksha Parishad. The reason for this is clearly the primacy of the governmental system in providing educational facilities at the primary level in terms of coverage and number of students and teachers. In addition to the primary schools we have also covered the non-formal education programme (also a government programme) and to some extent the Total Literacy Campaign which is also a massive effort at mobilisation and environment building for primary education. On occasions there are also references to private efforts in the field of primary education.

2. *Main Objectives*

The focus of the study is mainly on the issues and problems connected with access to and provision of minimum educational facilities, participation of children from different social groups in the educational system, participation and involvement of local communities and teachers in primary education and the availability of basic educational facilities in the schools located in different areas of the district. Broadly the main objectives of the present situation analysis are :

- (a) to examine the availability and spatial distribution of primary education facilities in the district and access of different social groups; the availability and condition of basic infrastructural facilities like school buildings, toilets, drinking water, play ground, etc. teaching-learning materials, facilities for co- and extra-curricular activities, health check up and other related programmes which are indirectly associated with the development of the health and education of the children.
- (b) to analyse the enrolment, drop-outs, retention, wastage/ stagnation and completion patterns at the school level.
- (c) to assess the adequacy of the number of teachers in relation to the number of students enrolled and attending school, the teaching-learning process and in the performance of their routine school related functions, as well as their commitment to their work judged by their regularity and punctuality, preparation of lesson plans, maintenance of diary and development of teaching-learning materials.
- (d) to assess the enthusiasm of students as evidenced by punctuality and regularity in attendance, completion of class and home work, cleanliness, and participation in extra curricular activities.
- (e) to examine the efficacy of the management system in primary education and the efficacy of bodies like the

Village Education Committee which have an important supervisory and watch-dog role at the village, block and district levels.

- (f) to understand the impact of and problems associated with the provision of incentives like Scholarships, free text books, etc. and their effectiveness in improving enrolment, retention and completion.
- (g) to understand the attitude of different sections of the society towards primary education in general and girls education in particular.
- (h) to assess the veracity and reliability of various education related records, eg. Bal Ganana Register, Teachers and Students attendance register, teachers diary and register, etc.

3. *Methodology and Process*

The situation analysis is based on both secondary and primary data in regard to the status of basic (especially primary and non-formal) education in Almora district. District level data relating to schools especially physical facilities aggregated at the block level, infrastructure facilities, classification of schools by distance from roads, number of students and teachers, enrolment and drop-outs, number of teachers, etc. in the government primary schools in

1993 was compiled from official records by the Basic Education Office, Almora. Information on the non-formal educational programmes, Aanganwadis, etc. was also provided by them for the year 1993. The secondary data was supplemented by an intensive study of schools. During this phase of the study we specifically looked at maintenance of records, eg. Bal Ganana Register, enrolment, drop-outs, teachers' and students' attendance, situation with regard to incentives like scholarships, performance of teachers and students, presence or absence of health programmes in schools, availability and utilization of various infrastructural facilities and teaching-learning materials, etc. The process followed has been described below. The basic objective of this phase of the study was : (a) to validate some of the secondary data provided by the Basic Education Office; (b) to get an insight into the system of preparation and maintenance of important records; and (c) to acquire at first hand, knowledge and insight into the working of the education system at the school level, the performance of teachers, the achievement of students and the expectations of the community from the primary education system. An attempt was also made to look at the problems of the especially disadvantaged groups, e.g. economically and socially backward groups especially SC/ST households and people living in remote and isolated areas and to understand their perceptions of and expectations from the primary school system.

Although the study was carried out in a number of blocks of Almora district, three blocks, viz. Dhauladevi, Kapkot and Syalde were selected for intensive study as they were reported to be especially different areas where the spread of primary education had been relatively slower and the problems of non-enrolment, non-attendance and drop-outs was reported to be greater than in the rest of the district, mainly on account of the relatively greater isolation of the rural settlements.

4. *Process*

The work of preparing the Situation Analysis of Primary Education in Almora District began with discussions with the officials of the Basic Education Department - Basic Education Officer and his team of officers including all the SDIs of the district. In the first meeting held at Almora on November 7, 1993, the framework of the Situation Analysis, the broad areas to be covered and the secondary data required was explained to them. The modalities of the Situation Analysis and the process to be followed was also discussed.

A second meeting was held on December 19-20 at Almora with the Basic Education Department Officials of Almora District. In this meeting, apart from the Director, Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, Mr AKM Kamaluddin, Project Officer, Education, UNICEF, Lucknow was also present. The secondary data compiled by the district officials was

reviewed and the programme for field visits by the research team of the Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow was finalised, along with the broad outline of what the field work would entail.

A meeting with the District Magistrate of Almora, who is the head of the District Management Group which has to implement the Basic Education Project in the district was also held. He was briefed about the preparatory work done and after discussions with him the programme for the Situation Analysis - which included field visit by the team from the Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow for purposes of field level validation of secondary data on a selective basis, personal observation and in-depth discussion with teachers, community leaders and members of the village community, preparation and finalisation of report, after its discussion in a Workshop at the district level to which experts from outside would also be invited - was finalised.

In the second stage a research team from the Institute toured the district from February 7 to 21, 1994. They covered three blocks, viz. Dhauladevi, Kapkot and Syalde (which had been identified by the District Education Officials as the ones with particular problems of access, enrolment or retention) quite extensively and another six blocks, viz. Takula, Bageshwar, Garur, Dwarahat, Bhikiyasen and Chaukhutiya less extensively. Thus out of the 14 blocks in the district nine were visited by the team.

During the field visits the team was accompanied by the SDI of the block concerned. The team visited schools and held discussions with the teachers. They checked the school register with a view to get an idea of enrolment, attendance, drop-out and completion figures, the number of days on which the school opened during the last month and the record of teachers attendance. This and other school related data were collected from 40 primary schools.

The linkages of primary schools with the Non-Formal System, TLC and ECCE were also examined. For this purpose discussions were held with persons engaged in these activities, e.g. NFE instructors, TLC volunteers and NGOs running Balwadis. A few private schools functioning in the rural areas were also visited.

Discussions were also held with the members of the community to get an idea of the peoples perceptions of the State of primary education, the problems from which it suffers and the steps that can be taken to solve the problems, especially in the context of their village. The role and activities of the VECs were also discussed.

In the third stage two one-day Workshops were held at the Block and Nyaya Panchayat levels at Kapkot and Naini respectively on April 11 and 12, where the research team along with the District and Block level officials of the Basic Education Department and representatives of UNICEF, Lucknow were present and where issues of people's

participation and role of Panchayats and VEC in promoting primary education and in UPE were discussed by members of the village community, teachers and people's representatives. The perception of the village community and of local leaders in regard to the working of primary schools in their area were an important feature of these Workshops.

CHAPTER II

ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES

Availability of schools within a minimum distance is among the foremost determining factors for increasing participation of children in the educational system. In Almora district provision of primary level school facilities has been quite adequate both in terms of numbers and geographical spread. Special care has also been taken to provide educational facilities in different remote and educationally backward areas and areas dominated by socially disadvantaged groups of population such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Considering the geographical and topographical problems in the district, relaxation in the norms fixed for the establishment of primary level school facilities based on minimum coverage of population size and the distance of villages to nearest school is also made. During recent past initiatives have also been taken to appoint at least one woman teacher in every school. This has been done on the understanding that women teachers can better understand the psychology and problems of the children, related to them, motivate them to learn and benefit from the educational activities in the school, and they can also be instrumental in getting more girls into the schools and retaining them there.

The responsibility of providing primary education in the district especially in the rural areas rests mainly with the government through the Basic Shiksha Parishad. Yet, various non-government organisations, trusts and indigenous organisations are also engaged in providing pre-primary level and basic education in different areas of the district.

1. *Access to Early Childhood Education*

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is being provided by both Government and Non-Government organisations in most of the blocks of the district. In the two most educationally backward blocks, Kapkot and Dhauladevi, some ECE Centres or pre-primary schools have been established by NGOs. These institutions are known as Balwadi schools and are generally imparting education upto First Standard, though in some places, where primary schools are not easily accessible, education upto Third Standard is also being provided by them. These schools in general do not have their own buildings and the classes are run in rented houses, or the houses provided by villagers free of cost. We found that a Balwadi school in any specific village is opened at the request of people of the village, which ensures their support for and to some extent, involvement in the Balwadi schools. The teachers are mainly appointed from the same village and if they are not available locally then from the neighbouring villages. Women having high school level education are appointed as teachers

in these schools and they are given basic training for about one or two months. Also refresher training courses are organised for around ten to fifteen days in a year.

During the recent past, several private educational institutions have also been involved in imparting pre-primary education to the children in small towns and areas which are well developed from the view point of transport, communication and basic infrastructural facilities like health, etc. In these schools the children are given admission after the age of three years. Instructions is imparted through both English and Hindi medium.

In addition we also have the Aanganwadi Centres run by the Women and Child Development Department of State Government through the ICDS which are also involved in providing ECE to children in age group of three to six years. In practice, however, we find that the Aanganwadi centres tend to give greater importance to supplementary nutrition and health check up of children. In the process ECE activities tend to get neglected.

At present 455 Aanganwadi centres are in operation in six blocks of the district. The number of Aanganwadi centres is as high as 100 in Bageshwar block and 96 in Dwarahat block. The lowest number, 50 are in Takula block. The total number of children enrolled in different Aanganwadi centres is reported to be 28737 of which 11802 children are in the age group of 3 to 6 years. A total of 21.42 per cent

children fall in the age group of less than one year. The details of Aanganwadi centres in each of the six blocks along with age-wise enrolment figures are given in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 : Number of Aanganwadis and Enrolments

Block	Aanganwadis		Enrolment of Children by age			
	Sanc- tioned	Funct- ioning	6 mths- 1 year	1 - 3 years	3 - 6 years	Total
Takula	50	50	990	1992	1034	4016
Bageshwar	100	100	1366	2050	2127	5543
Salt	73	73	750	1901	1784	4435
Dwarahat	96	96	879	1175	2466	4520
Kapkot	107	72	1200	2160	2480	5840
Tarikhet	101	64	967	1483	1911	4361
All Blocks	527	455	6152	10783	11802	28737

Source : Office of Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Almora

If we assume that in 1991 there were 65271 children in the age group of 3-5 plus years in Almora district (vide Institute of Applied Statistics and Development Studies, Directorate of Basic Education and UNICEF, Lucknow, District-wise Distribution of Estimated Population by Age-Group and Gender in Uttar Pradesh, 1951 to 1991 Census, December 1992) we find that about 18 per cent of the children in the age group were enrolled in Aanganwadi centres. This is a fairly high figure and compares very favourably with the corresponding figure of 10 per cent for the state as a whole.

Thus in terms of coverage the Aanganwadi centres under ICDS are the most important source of potential ECE outreach. ECE activities in these centres need to be strengthened and given much greater importance than at present. This will help in providing greater emphasis to the pre-school component of basic education and thereby better preparing the children for entry into primary schools.

2. *Non-Formal Education Programme*

As was indicated in the preceding chapter, due to several geographical and topographical problems existing in the district primary schools have not been able to spread to the remote areas of the district. Even in those areas where educational opportunities at the primary level are fairly well developed, a sizeable number of children are not enrolled in attending schools. There could be a number of reasons for non-enrolment, non-attendance and drop-outs : poverty and social backwardness of the parents, necessity for older children (especially girls) to remain in the house to do household chores and to look after younger siblings, inability of young children to walk long and arduous distances to school (even though the school may be established according to distance norms, individual hamlets/settlements/households may be at great distance from the

school and the way may be arduous and hazardous) etc. As a result, in spite of all efforts, at any given time a number of children are likely to be out of school and not in a position to enrol in or attend regularly primary schools. Hence the need for non-formal education centres. The non-formal education programme is presently being implemented in eight blocks of the district, viz. Hawalbagh, Bageshwar, Garur, Kapkot, Syalde, Bhikiasain, Dhauladevi and Salt. A total of 679 centres are being run in these eight blocks.

The implementation of Non-Formal Education Programme is supervised and overseen by the Basic Education Officer at district level. In each block, a Non-Formal Education Officer is assigned the work of supervision and implementation of the programme through the involvement of volunteers. The volunteers appointed by the Non-Formal Education Officer in different blocks are paid Rs.105 per month as a maintenance allowance. The number of NFE centres functioning in each block in 1993 ranged from 65 to 100. As can be seen from Table 2.2, the number of Non-Formal Education centres in 1993 was 100 each in Kapkot and Salt blocks, and 95 in Garur. The lowest number of centres (65) were in Syalde block, while in Dhauladevi their number was 66. In the other blocks the number ranged between 81 and 95. However, during the course of our visit to Syalde we came to know that the number of NFE centres in the block had gone upto 100. The total enrolment of children in these 679 NFE centres in 1993 is reported to be 9108.

Table 2.2 : Distribution of Non-Formal Education Centres and Enrolment : Almora District (1993)

Block	No. of centres	Enrolment	Enrolment per centre
Hawalbagh	81	1261	16
Bageshwar	89	1365	15
Garur	95	1013	11
Kapkot	100	1571	16
Syalde	65	658	10
Bhikiasain	83	914	11
Dhauladevi	66	865	13
Salt	100	4611	15
All Blocks	679	9108	13

Source : Office of Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Almora

During our visits in various blocks of the district we visited the Non-Formal Education Offices in Kapkot, Garur and Syalde blocks. Meetings were also organised in Kapkot and Syalde blocks with the volunteers and concerned officials of the NFE programme. In all, our observation was that most of the centres are not performing well. The volunteers are not taking adequate interest in the programme because the rates of honorarium are low and they are furthermore not paid in time. The payments have been in arrears for many months in most of the areas. An extreme case was that of Garur where

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the volunteers had not been paid any honorarium since March 1992. Similar complaints were also made by the volunteers of Kapkot and Syalde. The training programme for volunteers is generally organised in the block office or central schools but most of the volunteers we talked they did not participate in such training programmes as they did not have enough money to pay for their expenses. The participation of volunteers in training camps was reported to be 50 to 60 per cent in Garur block, 35 to 50 per cent in Kapkot and 65 to 85 per cent in Syalde block.

We also found that the veracity or reliability of information relating to the number of NFE centres, enrolment therein and the functioning of centres provided by the education department is, by and large, low. It was revealed, for instance that in Garur block only 10 centres were actually functioning properly as against 95 centres reported to be functional. We also found that a large number of children enrolled in different NFE centres in Kapkot and Garur blocks were also enrolled in formal schools. Thus the NFE centres in these areas could be said to be functioning like coaching centres for children already enrolled in schools. Some of the centres were certainly found to be functioning quite well because of the greater devotion and interest shown by the volunteers running them. For instance, one child from a centre of Garur block was selected for admission to Navodaya school during last year. We also found two women volunteers, one each in Kapkot and Syalde blocks

who are not only teaching children in NFE centres but they are equally active in teaching the children of formal schools as unpaid volunteers. On occasions these volunteers take the children of non-formal centres to the formal schools and teach them along with the children of formal schools located in their respective villages.

The NFE volunteers reported that in spite of their efforts to motivate parents on a regular basis to enrol and send their children to NFE centres they had not been very successful as in their view the parents mostly prefer to engage their children in household activities like collection of fuelwood and other forest products, taking care of younger siblings and helping in agricultural activities rather than encourage them to go to school or NFE centres. This practice was reported to be more common in the case of girls.

A close look at the working of the NFE centres revealed that most volunteers are teaching students only occasionally. Teaching was generally carried out during the periods of the examination of the children. Most of the children who are enrolled in NFE centres are also enrolled in formal schools. So the children of formal schools have to appear in the examinations organised by both formal schools as well as NFE centres. Many NFE volunteers informed us that they had prepared two children for the examination of class five to be held this year. As per the provision of NFE programme a centre should have atleast ten children enrolled. However,

in several centres the population of enrolled children was much less. It was also found that some volunteers were operating more than one centre simultaneously. In Syalde, we found that in 18 out of 33 centres, the strength of children enrolled was less than 10. The figures of enrolment varied from a low of 4 children to a high of 18 children for different centres.

We made a somewhat detailed analysis of 33 NFE centres in Syalde regarding the participation of children belonging to different social groups. We found that the total number of children enrolled in these 33 centres from various groups of population was 329. Of these, the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe children constituted 37.08 per cent. Six centres had only SC/ST children enrolled. In another five centres the proportion of SC/ST children was much higher than that of children from the other (higher) caste groups. As far as the analysis of the enrolment pattern of boys and girls in these centres was concerned we found that in most of the centres enrolment of girl students was much higher. In fact in all the centres of the block girls constituted 70 per cent of those enrolled and 81 per cent of the centres had more girls students than boys.

3. *Access to Primary Schools*

In spite of the fact that considerable emphasis has been placed on universalisation of primary education as part of

the process of planned development since the fifties and great importance attached to providing access to primary schools to all sections of the society, yet it has not been possible till today to provide all remote areas and smaller sized hamlets with basic educational facilities. In certain areas of the district, particularly in Kapkot and Dhauladevi blocks, the children have to cover upto 4 to 6 kms. distance to reach the nearest primary school. The nature of human settlements in these areas with a large number of small and widely scattered habitations/hamlets has created a genuine problem of making primary schools easily accessible to the children of these villages. In spite of the large number of primary schools having been already established in Almora district (Table 2.3) a number of habitations still remain unserved. As per the norms prevalent in the hills a primary school should be established within a distance of 1 km. from a village and in habitations where population exceeds 300. However, at present the average size of population per school works out to 560 in the district. This figure is as high as 607 in Takula block followed by 601 in Hawalbagh while it is lowest in Bhaisiachhana (357). Also in 10 of the 14 blocks of the district the average population per school is more than 500 while in three blocks it is more than 460.

As per the estimates of Basic Education Department 79 new primary schools are to be established in the district in order to achieve saturation on the basis of existing norms. While two blocks viz. Takula and Dwarahat have already been

fully covered, another two viz. Bhaisiachhana and Bageshwar require only one school each. The highest number of new schools are needed in Garur (12) followed by Dhauladevi, Hawalbagh and Kapkot blocks (10 each). In the other blocks the number of new primary schools required according to norms varies between 4 and 9.

Table 2.3 : Number and Distribution of Primary Schools :
Almora District, 1993

Block	No. of schools	Average Population per school	No. of additional schools required (as per norm)
Takula	97	607	-
Dhauladevi	118	502	10
Bhaisiachhana	80	357	1
Lamgara	93	480	9
Hawalbag	107	601	10
Kapkot	150	469	10
Garur	99	583	12
Bageshwar	128	526	1
Chaukhutia	87	572	-
Tarikhet	117	563	8
Dwarahat	103	584	4
Bhikiasain	90	464	5
Syalde	100	501	4
Salt	123	514	5
All Blocks	1492	560	79

Source : Office of Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Almora

4. *School Buildings*

The buildings of primary schools are mainly constructed by the Basic Education Department. However, in some villages a number of schools have been constructed by the people themselves. Subsequently these school buildings were handed over to the Basic Education Department. For the construction of school buildings land is provided by the concerned Gram Sabha. Most of the schools we visited have sufficient land of which a major part is used as a playground for the children and as garden. In many schools the spare land available is used for the cultivation of agricultural crops, fodder and fruits. The earnings from the land are used for meeting the expenses of the maintenance and repair of school buildings and furniture, petty expenditure for functions and bal-sabhas of the children, etc.

In Almora there are a total of 1492 primary schools as may be seen in Table 2.4. Most schools have only two class rooms for teaching five classes. Thus two classes are held in one class room at a time. The problem is overcome to some extent during fair weather by holding classes in the open. The real difficulty arises during the rainy season, generally between July and September when classes have to perforce be held indoors. Out of the 1492 primary schools in the district almost exactly 50 per cent have only two class rooms while another eight schools have only a single class room. Schools with three class rooms account for 34 per cent of the

total, while 12 per cent schools have four rooms and only 3 per cent schools have more than 5 class rooms.

Table 2.4 : Situation of Class Rooms According to Strength of Students in the District

Strength of Students	Availability of Class-room by No.of Schools						Total Schools
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	
Less than 39	1	41	96	-	-	-	238
40 - 79	7	373	217	-	2	-	599
80 - 119	-	166	128	140	8	-	442
120 - 159	-	51	41	17	4	-	113
160 - 199	-	5	18	10	17	-	50
200 +	-	11	7	17	11	4	50
Total Schools	8	747	507	184	42	4	1492

Source : Office of Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Almora

Of the 40 schools which we visited we found that all had reasonably good buildings with a separate staff room for the teachers. We found only one school building in Kapkot block in an extremely poor state. This school has been constructed by the people through their own efforts. We found one room was without roof and the doors were badly damaged. The teachers had to keep all school registers at their homes. Most of the registers, except attendance register were not available in the school.

As per information provided by Basic Education Office the condition of 133 school buildings (8.91 per cent of total) is very poor in the district, and the buildings of another 203 schools are in need of urgent repair. On the whole, however, we found that the situation in regard to school buildings in Almora district is not too bad; it is certainly better than in the plains. All schools have buildings and the condition and maintenance of the buildings is decidedly better than in the rest of the state. The situation is even better in regard to central/lead schools. We found that their condition in terms of decoration of class rooms, standard of maintenance of school buildings, cleanliness, availability of furnitures, etc. was significantly better than the other schools.

5. *Other Infrastructure Facilities*

As far as the availability of teaching-learning materials in primary schools is concerned we found that these schools have been provided various materials and educational aids like furniture, black-board, tat-patties, games and sports equipment on various occasions in the past. Our own observations in forty schools showed that chairs and tables were available in sufficient numbers in most of the schools except in two schools in Kapkot block of which one school was located in a Scheduled Castes dominated village. In this school only one chair was available for two teachers and only two black-boards for four classes. In another five schools

of Kapkot block the condition of furniture (especially chairs) and black-boards was very poor and in need of urgent repair/replacement.

The situation regarding the availability of drinking water facilities and toilets was very bad in most of the schools. In the absence of any provision of drinking water facilities the students have to depend on nearby villages. None of the schools visited by us had toilets. This causes a lot of inconvenience especially for girls as they are forced to use protected hill sides and fields far away from the schools. According to secondary data provided by the Basic Education Office drinking water facility is available in only 7.71 per cent of primary schools in the district, only 40 schools in the district are electrified and about 7 per cent of primary schools are reported to have toilets within the school premises.

In the class rooms jute matting (tat-patties) is used for seating of children. The tat-patties are available in sufficient quantity in most of the schools. We were informed that prior to the initiation of Operation Blackboard there was a shortage of tat-patties in most of the schools, but this problem has not been overcome in the district since 1990. However, in some schools in Kapkot the children were found sitting either on tiles inside the classrooms or on the ground outside the classrooms. In one school the children reported that they regularly bring tat-patties from their

home for use it in the school. The reason for non-availability of tat-patties in this case was found to be the lethargy of the school in fetching its share of allotted operation blackboard materials including tat-patties from the central school located in the block office. On the other hand, we also found that some schools in Syalde block are making efforts to provide tables and benches to the students with some money being put up by the school and the rest being provided by village panchayats and parents.

Under the operation blackboard the primary schools are provided various items of furniture such as blackboard, chairs, tables, etc. teaching-learning materials like maths, kit, globe, science kit, etc. musical instruments and sports equipment for the development of extra-curricular activities among the children. Except the tables, chairs and blackboards all the materials and items are supplied to the schools from the concerned block office. The chairs, tables and black-boards are made by local carpenters and supplied to the schools through contractors. In some cases the school teachers acting in league with powerful local people have cornered the contracts for supplying furniture. They in turn have either not made the supplies in time or supplied very poor quality furniture. For instance in some schools of Kapkot most items of furniture had not been supplied till the time of our visit. In some schools the black-boards and chairs which were supplied six months to one year ago have fallen apart and are in need of immediate repair.

The teaching-learning materials provided under the operation black-board scheme were seen to have helped the students significantly in learning process. The teachers reported that the use of maths. kit had helped in solving most of the problems faced by the students while learning concepts related to fractions and divisions. However, it was distressing to find that in a large number of schools the demonstration of these materials had not been carried out, and in many cases the boxes in which they were kept had not even been opened. Our findings show that in a large proportion of the schools (55 per cent) demonstration of any OB materials had not taken place. Around one-third of the schools had occasionally shown these items to the students.

Table 2.5 : Use of Operation Blackboard
Items in Sample Schools

Block	(No. of Schools)			
	Good	Satis- factory	Very Poor	Total Schools
Dhauladevi	-	3 (50.00)	3 (50.00)	6 (100.00)
Kapkot	2 (16.67)	2 (16.67)	8 (66.66)	12 (100.00)
Syalde	1 (12.50)	3 (37.50)	4 (40.00)	8 (100.00)
Other Blocks	2 (14.29)	5 (35.71)	7 (50.00)	14 (100.00)
All Blocks	5 (12.50)	13 (32.50)	22 (55.00)	40 (100.00)

Source : Primary Survey carried out by Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow

Note : Figures in parentheses give percentages.

Only about 13 per cent of the sample schools were found to have utilized and demonstrated the different teaching-learning materials in a proper and good manner (Table 2.5).

We find once again that the use of operation blackboard items was most unsatisfactory in the schools located in Kapkot block, as over three-fourths of the schools had not used any of these materials for teaching-learning purposes. Inquiries from the teachers revealed that a large number of teachers were concerned about the safety and upkeep of these materials and were apprehensive that they may get damaged in use for which they were likely to be held responsible. Some teachers also reported that due to lack of proper training and knowledge regarding the use of these items they were unable to demonstrate them in the classrooms. At the same time a large number of teachers were not aware of the practical importance of most of the materials. Another important problem which came to light was that only one teacher from each school was provided training on the use of the OB materials. In case the particular teacher was transferred there was none other available to make use of them for teaching-learning purposes. It was came to our knowledge that in some schools, especially in Kapkot and Syalde blocks the sports and games equipment too were not made available to the students.

As regards the availability of books and other learning materials we were informed that they were not supplied by the

schools but they had to be purchased from nearby market centres. In some places note-books, pencils, ink and ruler are available locally but for purchase of text-books the children have to depend on the nearby small towns. The children or their parents have to visit the nearest town at distances ranging from 2 kms. in Kapkot to 60 kms. in Syalde to get required text books and other study materials. Though the note-books are available in local shops, yet most of the book sellers do not provide text-books unless people also purchase note-books and other supplies along with the text-books because the margin of profit is higher on the latter items. On the whole, we found that the major problem faced by the people was non-availability of text-books at the proper time.

6. *Total Literacy Campaign*

The Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) has been in operation in the district for over a year. The teachers, youths and students are engaged in a massive voluntary effort of imparting literacy skills to persons belonging to the age group of fifteen to thirty-five years. Since one of the objectives of TLC is to create an environment for primary education we thought it would be worthwhile to take a brief look at the programme and its impact, if any, on primary education.

During our visits in the different blocks of the district we contacted several volunteers and other people engaged in providing instructions either as Volunteer Teachers, Master Trainers, Supervisors or Coordinators of the programme. We also visited several literacy centres to see at first hand the functioning of TLC, talk to the trainers and trainees and find out about the participation of different social groups in the programmes. In most of the areas of the district the school teachers are working in TLC as Master Trainers and Supervisors while the headmasters of Junior High School and Secondary Schools are working as Coordinators of the programme. Those doing the actual teaching are known as Volunteer Teachers. The VTs come from amongst voluntary agencies, volunteers working in the NFE programmes, unemployed youth and also school going children. Regarding the functioning of TLC in different areas we found a mixed performance at the operational level as well as the participation of different groups of people. In Syalde the TLC programme is functioning quite successfully with the active involvement of block officials, teachers and NFE personnel. This team has developed various songs in the local language and local folk dances to spread awareness. Through these means attempts are being made to generate awareness and motivate people for literacy especially in remote areas or in places where there is a concentration of illiterates. In Kapkot and Dhauladevi the programme is successful only in a few areas. In most of the areas the

programme has been unsuccessful because of lack of interest among volunteers and other people participating in it. We were told that most volunteers are not ready to work in the TLC without the payment of some honorarium to them. However, in some areas of these blocks the school going children were found to be seriously engaged in teaching the adult illiterates. In all, wherever the programme was found to be functioning successfully the participation of women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and poor people (having no land or small/marginal holdings) was considerably higher as compared to other groups of population. It was however difficult to judge the impact of TLC on the environment for primary education. In general it can be claimed that TLC tended to be more successful in those areas where the primary education scene was also better.

7. *School Health Programme*

The delivery of health care in most of the schools was severely lacking. A sizeable number of school-going children had not been immunised. This kind of situation was mainly prevalent in the remote and backward areas of Kapkot and Syalde blocks. There were a number of schools where no health workers had ever visited and most of the children had not seen an ANM or Doctor in their life. A study of the frequency and pattern of visits by health workers to the 40 schools studied by us gives interesting results (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6 : Visits of Health Workers to Primary Schools

Frequency of visits	Kapkot	Syalde	Dhauladevi	Others	All Blocks
Never visited	3 (25.00)	-	-	-	3 (7.50)
Less than 6 months	-	-	-	1 (7.14)	1 (2.50)
6 months to 1 year	-	2 (25.00)	1 (16.67)	3 (21.43)	6 (15.00)
1 to 2 years	-	4 (50.00)	2 (33.33)	6 (42.86)	12 (30.00)
2 to 5 years	4 (33.33)	1 (12.50)	2 (33.33)	4 (28.57)	11 (27.50)
5 years and above	5 (41.67)	1 (12.50)	1 (16.67)	-	7 (17.50)
Total Schools	12 (100.00)	8 (100.00)	6 (100.00)	14 (100.00)	40 (100.00)

Note : Figures in brackets represent percentages

For instance in Kapkot the health workers never visited three schools while in another 5 their last visit took place more than five years ago. Similarly, in the other educationally backward block of Dhauladevi, half of the total schools reported that the health workers had visited them over two years ago. In all the health workers visited 17.5 per cent of the schools 5 years back and another 27.5 per cent schools between 2 to 5 years back while 7.5 per cent schools were

never visited. We were also informed by the teachers that when the health workers do visit the schools they only provide vitamin and calcium tablets to the children. They generally visit schools only when there is an outbreak of some epidemic in the village. In brief, therefore, the school health programme can hardly be called effective and seems to have been taken up in a routine manner in the district. The health workers visits are much too infrequent to have any visible impact on the health of the children. Even when they do visit the schools they do not appear to be doing much.

CHAPTER III

ENROLMENT, DROP-OUTS AND ACHIEVEMENT

Expansion of educational facilities is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for improved enrolment, retention and completion rates. What really is more important is the extent to which these facilities are being utilized by the people. Success in providing educational facilities can be said to have been achieved when various groups of population utilize it fully and equitably. In this chapter, therefore, we will try to examine the extent and pattern of utilization of primary education facilities in terms of enrolment and drop-out rates in general and among different groups of population identified for the purpose of the study, viz. boys and girls and scheduled castes/scheduled tribes children in different blocks of the district. It will be worthwhile to point out that this analysis has been carried out on the basis of data pertaining to government managed and controlled primary schools only.

1. Enrolment : Overall

The total population of children in the primary school-going age (6-11 years), is reported to be 1.32 lakhs in the

18 blocks of Almora district and comprises of 67 thousand boys and 64 thousand girls (Table 3.1). The actual number of children enrolled in the primary schools is around 1.23 lakhs. This enrolment of girls was found to be around 48 per

Table 3.1 : Population and Enrolment of Children (6-11 Years)

Block	Population of Children in the age group 6 to 11 years			Enrolment			Rates of Enrolment		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Salt	5310	5356	10666	5108	4987	10095	96.20	93.11	94.65
Syalde	4143	4228	8371	4039	3965	8004	97.49	93.78	95.62
Bhikiasain	3650	3914	7564	3575	3835	7140	91.95	97.98	97.96
Tarikheth	5652	5795	11447	5445	5447	10892	96.34	93.99	95.15
Chaukhutia	3960	4191	8151	3880	4025	7905	97.98	96.04	96.98
Dwarahat	5364	5399	10763	5288	5211	10499	98.58	96.52	97.55
Hawalbag	4839	4638	9477	4651	4427	9078	96.11	95.45	95.79
Takula	4761	4310	9071	4675	4106	8781	98.19	95.27	96.80
Lamgara	3800	3467	7267	3355	2827	6182	88.29	81.54	85.07
Bhasiachhana	4083	3148	7231	3803	2531	6334	93.14	80.40	87.60
Dhauladevi	5206	4193	9399	4689	3355	8044	90.07	80.01	85.58
Garur	4590	4428	9018	4213	3976	8189	91.79	87.79	90.81
Bageshwar	6834	5927	12761	6594	5613	12207	96.49	94.70	95.66
Kapkot	5369	5059	10428	4615	4422	9037	85.96	87.41	86.36
All Blocks	67561	64053	131614	63930	58727	122657	94.63	91.69	93.19

Source : Office of Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Almora.

cent of the total. The proportion of children among the primary school going age group enrolled in schools thus comes to 93.17 per cent. The enrolment rates of boys and girls are estimated to be 94.63 per cent and 91.69 per cent respectively in the district. Across the eighteen blocks of the district the enrolment rates of children are lowest in block Langara (85.07 per cent) followed by Dhauladevi and Kapkot (85.58 per cent and 86.36 per cent respectively). However, the highest enrolment rates (97.96 per cent) are to be found in Bhikiasain block followed by 97.55 per cent in Dwarahat and 96.98 per cent in Chaukhutia. In the remaining blocks the rates of enrolment of children range from 90.81 per cent in Garur block to 96.80 per cent in Takula block (Table 3.1). It needs to be pointed out, however, that these are gross enrolment rates. The net or age-specific enrolment rates are not available but they are likely to be lower.

As far as the enrolment of girls and boys is concerned it is observed that in Kapkot and Bhikiasain blocks the girls are utilizing primary education to a greater extent as compared to boys as is evident from the enrolment rates. In Kapkot the enrolment of girls and boys is 87.41 per cent and 85.96 per cent respectively. Similarly in Bhikiasain the enrolment figure for girls stands at 97.98 per cent as against 91.95 per cent for boys. The enrolment of girls is low in two blocks : 80.01 per cent in Dhauladevi and 80.40 per cent in Bhasiachhana. At the other extreme the highest enrolment rate for girls is to be found in Bhikiasain block

(97.98 per cent) followed by Dwarahat and Chaukhutia (96.52 per cent and 96.04 per cent respectively). Thus it can be seen that the enrolment rate of girls and boys are more or less similar in much of the district and except in one or two blocks like Dhauladevi and Bhaisiachhana, there is no major problem of enrolment of girls. In Kapkot, on the other hand, the enrolment of both boys and girls is low, though the enrolment rate among girls is relatively higher.

During our visits to these blocks, viz. Kapkot and Dhauladevi, we found that both school related problems as well as poor socio-economic background of children are the main factors associated with the poor enrolment of children in primary schools. In both the blocks, the villages are very small in size and the settlements are widely dispersed. Therefore a significant proportion of children of these villages have to cover long distances (4 to 6 kms.) to reach schools. Though in many non-accessible areas in Dhauladevi block NGOs are providing pre-primary education extending even upto class two, yet our suspicion is that many children do not continue their education after the pre-primary stage provided by these NGO-run Balwadis mainly on account of the inaccessibility of schools. This needs further intensive investigation. The poor socio-economic background of parents was also a contributing factor to non-enrolment in these blocks. Older girls, especially, are needed in the house to look after their younger siblings when their mothers go to forest to collect firewood and fodder. Some of these

children were also found collecting forest products for sale to the contractors.

2. *Enrolment : Sample Schools*

We now take a detailed look at enrolment data in the forty primary schools which we visited. Table 3.2 shows that in Dhauladevi, Kapkot and Syalde blocks the proportion of children enrolled is significantly lower than in the other blocks. The combined enrolment rates in the 40 schools were found to be 92.44 per cent consisting of 94.02 per cent boys enrolment and 90.65 per cent girls enrolment. The lowest rate of girls enrolment 78.10 per cent was in Dhauladevi followed by 89.38 per cent in Kapkot and 92.92 per cent in Syalde. The corresponding figure for the schools in the remaining blocks was 98.68 per cent.

Table 3.2 further shows that the overall enrolment rates among SC/ST children (93.42 per cent) are higher than the rates found among children belonging to the upper castes (92.20 per cent). This discrepancy is most marked in Dhauladevi where the enrolment of SC/ST children is 92.41 per cent as compared to only 85.05 per cent for upper caste children. In Kapkot and Syalde on the other hand enrolment rates of SC/ST children were lower than those of upper caste children - the discrepancy being more marked in Kapkot : 84.17 per cent for SC/ST as compared to 91.06 per cent for upper castes. However, the enrolment rates of girls from the

higher castes are higher in most of the blocks as compared to the girls belonging to SC/ST families with the sole exception of Dhauladevi block. In the case of Dhauladevi the enrolment rate of girls from the general castes is 76.09 per cent as against 92.93 per cent enrolment of SC/ST girls. Among the boys belonging to different social groups the proportion enrolled in basic education is considerably lower among the general caste population (93.68 per cent) as compared to SC/ST population (95.25 per cent) (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 : Enrolment Rates of Different Social Groups

Blocks	Upper Castes			SC/ST			Total		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Dhau- devi	93.44	76.09	85.05	92.73	92.03	92.41	93.34	78.10	86.03
Kapkot	87.78	94.83	91.06	90.95	74.68	84.17	88.76	89.38	89.04
Syalde	96.80	93.11	94.92	93.88	92.05	93.01	96.19	92.92	94.54
Other Blocks	94.96	98.74	96.72	98.65	98.41	98.55	95.78	98.68	97.10
All Blocks	93.68	90.58	92.20	95.26	90.97	93.42	94.02	90.65	92.44

The above analysis clearly shows that the SC/ST population are not lagging behind their upper caste counterparts in availing the advantages of education for their children. In fact, in certain cases, they are even ahead of them.

Contrary to our findings based on the information from 40 schools in Almora, the enrolment data provided to us by the office of Basic Education indicates that the enrolment rate among the upper caste children (94.35 per cent) is higher than that of scheduled caste (89.52 per cent) and scheduled tribe children (83.81 per cent) in Almora district. Similarly, there are also variations in enrolment rates among boys and girls among the different social groups. The enrolment rates of upper castes boys is 95.38 per cent as

Table 3.3 : Population and Enrolment of Children by Caste

Description of Children	Upper Caste	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribes	All Castes
Population in the age group 6-11 years	100813	30554	247	131614
Boys	51210	16231	120	67561
Girls	49603	14323	127	64053
Total Enrolled Children	95114	27354	207	122675
Boys	48816	15007	107	63930
Girls	46280	12347	100	58727
Non-Enrolled Children	5713	3200	44	8957
Boys	2390	1224	17	3631
Girls	3323	1976	27	5326
Enrolment Rates	94.35	89.52	83.81	93.21
Boys	95.38	92.46	89.17	94.63
Girls	93.30	86.20	78.74	91.69

Source : Office of Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Almora

against 92.46 per cent for SC boys and 89.17 per cent in the case of ST boys. Similarly, in the case of girls the enrolment rates are 93.30 per cent, 86.20 per cent and 78.74 per cent in the case of general caste, SC and ST groups respectively (Table 3.3). The difference in the enrolment of upper caste and SC/ST girls is quite sharp.

We have also examined the enrolment rates among the children belonging to different social groups and among boys and girls at the block level. The data in Table 3.4 reveal that the children from SC/ST households are not lagging behind in availing the facility of primary education. In fact, in some blocks the enrolment rate of SC/ST children is much higher than children of the upper castes. The enrolment rate of SC/ST children varies from a low of 83.02 per cent in Hawalbagh to a high of 94.50 per cent in Dwarahat, while the enrolment rates of the upper caste children vary between 85.03 per cent in Lamgara and 100.31 per cent in Hawalbagh. It is also to be seen that the proportion of SC/ST children enrolled in primary education in Lamgara is higher than the children from the upper castes. The same is also true in Kapkot and Garur blocks.

As far as gender differences in availment of primary education are concerned it is seen that despite the significant progress made by the girls in the field of education, inequalities continue to exist between enrolment rates of boys and girls. Moreover, there are also glaring

Table 3.4 : Enrolment Rates of Different Castes

Block	Upper Castes			Scheduled Castes/Tribes		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Salt	98.64	95.18	96.87	87.87	84.52	86.32
Syalde	100.77	94.69	97.66	79.24	87.70	83.19
Bhikiasain	98.06	99.87	99.00	97.49	20.23	93.74
Tarikheth	95.15	95.21	96.17	93.70	90.25	91.92
Chaukhutia	98.55	96.76	97.62	96.12	93.51	94.82
Dwarahat	99.15	98.22	98.68	97.13	91.72	94.50
Hawalbagh	99.75	100.90	100.31	86.15	79.61	83.02
Takula	99.61	98.25	98.96	94.96	88.72	91.95
Lamgara	87.65	82.40	85.03	89.81	78.71	85.18
Bhaisiachhana	93.78	80.37	87.89	91.01	80.52	86.60
Dhauladevi	91.48	82.99	87.60	84.38	64.93	76.61
Garur	89.93	90.04	89.99	97.38	89.07	93.25
Bageshwar	96.29	95.86	96.08	97.03	90.94	94.39
Kapkot	82.62	87.39	84.95	97.95	87.48	93.02
All Blocks	95.22	93.18	94.22	92.76	86.52	89.83

Source : Office of Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Almora

inequalities between the girls belonging to the upper castes and those from the SC/ST group of population. The enrolment of girls from the upper castes compares very favourably with that of boys. It is as high as 100.90 per cent in Hawalbagh while the lowest figure is to be found in Bhaisiachhana

(80.37 per cent). The highest and lowest rates of enrolment for upper caste boys : 100.77 per cent (Syalde block) and 82.62 per cent (Kapkot block) respectively are not very different from the former. Bhikhiāsen, Tarikhet, Hawalbagh, Garur and Kapkot are the blocks where the enrolment rates of girls belonging to the upper castes is higher than that of their male counterparts.

Among the SC/ST population the highest enrolment among boys is in Kapkot (97.95 per cent) and lowest in Syalde (79.24 per cent). The enrolment rates among girls are highest in Chaukhutia (93.51 per cent) and lowest in Dhauladevi (64.93 per cent). On the whole it may be seen that with the exception of a few blocks the boys of the disadvantaged groups of population are also disadvantageously placed in the availment of primary education. These inequalities are even more pronounced in the case of girls. Bhaisiachhana is the only block where the enrolment of girls from the SC/ST population is marginally higher than that of the general population (Table 3.4).

3. *Stagnation, Drop-Outs and Retention : District Profile*

If we look at the rates of retention stagnation and drop-outs among the boys and girls we observe that the retention rate is only 43.90 per cent in the district as a whole for the combined average of boys and girls. At the same time it is also seen that wide variations exist between

different blocks. The highest retention rate was found in Bhaisiachhana (59.47 per cent) and the lowest was in Dhauladevi (37.55 per cent). As can be expected, retention rate of boys is higher (47.20 per cent) as compared to that of girls (40.30 per cent) with the exception of Dwarahat.

Table 3.5 : Rates of Drop-Outs and Stagnation at Primary Education

Block	Retention			Stagnation			Drop-Outs		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Salt	47.20	39.90	43.35	32.05	37.78	34.73	20.75	22.32	21.48
Syalde	48.20	36.98	42.63	34.90	33.65	34.28	16.90	29.37	23.09
Bhikiasain	43.45	41.71	42.57	35.49	36.62	36.06	21.06	21.67	21.37
Chaukhutia	47.97	42.63	45.23	42.74	45.51	44.16	9.29	11.86	10.61
Dwarahat	35.94	36.73	36.33	41.31	37.28	39.32	22.75	26.00	24.35
Tarikhet	44.97	42.43	43.73	37.07	39.61	37.29	19.97	17.96	18.99
Hawalbag	43.23	43.57	43.39	31.04	33.25	32.08	25.73	23.18	24.54
Takula	56.77	46.71	51.91	18.77	23.19	20.91	24.46	30.10	27.19
Bhaisiachhana	62.10	55.89	59.47	26.62	25.75	26.25	11.29	18.36	14.29
Dhauladevi	47.08	27.84	37.55	34.22	45.81	39.96	18.70	26.35	22.49
Lamgara	46.93	29.49	38.32	30.82	46.00	38.32	22.25	24.51	23.37
Garur	46.13	41.63	44.10	50.93	50.96	50.95	2.94	7.40	4.96
Bageshwar	51.36	50.20	50.84	45.93	46.06	45.99	2.71	3.74	3.17
Kapkot	47.39	39.27	43.57	31.92	37.26	34.43	20.69	23.46	21.99
All Blocks	47.20	40.30	43.90	35.50	38.98	37.17	17.30	20.72	18.94

Source : Basic Education Office, Almora

Bhaisiachhana not only has the highest overall rate of retention but also among boys as well as girls. The lowest retention for boys was found in Dwarahat whereas Dhauladevi had the lowest retention among girls (Table 3.5).

Since the rate of retention in the district as a whole is much below 50 per cent, it follows that stagnation and drop-out rates are high. Among the two, the level of stagnation is higher at 37.17 per cent. The boys have a slightly lower level of stagnation in comparison to girls except in Syalde, Hawalbagh and Bhaisiachhana blocks. Among the different blocks Garur has the highest rate of stagnation (50.95 per cent) while the lowest rate is the Takula for both boys and girls.

The drop-out rate among children was reported to be just under 19 per cent. As usual wide variations exist between different blocks with Bageshwar and Garur being the two outstanding blocks with a drop-out rate of less than 5 per cent each. As against this Takula reported the highest drop-out rate of around 27 per cent. On the whole it is seen that girls have a higher drop-out rate, except in the two blocks of Tarikhet and Hawalbagh (Table 3.5).

4. *Stagnation, Drop-Outs and Retention : Sample Schools*

The analysis of retention and drop-outs presented so far has been based on secondary information received from the department of basic education. We have also attempted to

work out these estimates separately on the basis of the information collected by us from our visits to 40 schools of Almora. The rates of retention (Table 3.6) have been worked out on a class-wise basis. It can be seen that in Class I retention is 100 per cent, and in Class II the rate is above 90 per cent. However, by the time children reach Class III the rate of retention begins to decline. In the three blocks covered intensively by us it was around 80 per cent and was even less in the remaining blocks (76.63 per cent). The general practice in the schools is that upto Class II the children are not detained on grounds of poor performance. Thus it may be concluded that those who failed to make it to Class II or III were drop-out cases. However, in case of Class IV and V we have cases of stagnation as well as drop-outs. Taking all the blocks together, the retention in Class IV and V was found to be 63.49 and 61.02 per cent respectively thereby meaning that 36.51 and 38.98 per cent students respectively had either failed or had dropped out of the education stream. These figures are somewhat better as compared to the secondary information received from the Basic Education Office, Almora for the individual blocks as well as for the district as a whole.

Thus considering the above situation with regard to enrolment, drop-outs, stagnation and repetition, it can be claimed that the educational policy of government is more effective in opening primary schools than in keeping children in school. Wastage at the primary level continues to persist

despite the expansion of educational institutions at this level. At the same time, the disparities between the figures of enrolment and drop-outs reveal not only the wastage in the education system but also the prevalence of bogus names and incorrect and even at times fabricated information. Existing data on enrolments suffers from over-reporting. We found many children whose names appeared in the rolls had not attended school since the very beginning of the session. There was another very serious flaw in the enrolment data provided in various documents of the schools, rendering its reliability suspect : in the estimation of enrolment rates the reference population is that of children aged 6 to 11 years while in actual practice the schools enrol children in

Table 3.6 : Retention and Drop-Outs Among Children in Selected Blocks

Block	Number of Children Reaching Different Classes				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Dhauladevi	53 (100.00)	51 (96.23)	42 (79.24)	36 (67.92)	36 (67.92)
Kapkot	129 (100.00)	118 (91.47)	104 (80.62)	84 (65.12)	79 (61.24)
Syalde	88 (100.00)	82 (93.18)	71 (80.68)	54 (61.36)	50 (56.82)
Other Blocks	338 (100.00)	314 (92.90)	259 (76.63)	212 (62.72)	206 (60.94)
All Blocks	608 (100.00)	565 (92.93)	476 (78.29)	386 (63.49)	371 (61.02)

the age group of 5 to 11 plus ⁴⁹ years, leading to an inflation of enrolment rates. That is why we pointed out earlier that the enrolment rates given in official data for Alomora district are gross enrolment rates and not age-specific rates, which are bound to be lower.

5. Attendance

Along with enrolment and retention another important goal is regular attendance and the allied virtue of punctuality. We were dismayed to observe that a large number of children do not attend school regularly due to one reason or another. School related problems as well as the family environment of children are the main factors responsible for the irregularity of children's attendance in school. We studied the attendance of children in the schools visited by us for the month of January 1994. Our analysis shows significant differences among different schools located in different blocks and even among schools of the same block in terms of number of days the schools functioned during the month of January 1994. Three schools, one each in Dhauladevi, Kapkot and Bageshwar blocks, functioned for 17 days, while two schools in Garur block remained opened for only 12 days. A majority of schools in various blocks functioned for 14-15 days. These variations in the number of days on which the schools remained open in the same district and sometimes in the same block in a particular month are

totally inexplicable except in terms of teacher absenteeism/irregularity/leave.

Furthermore we found that an overwhelming proportion of children, particularly those studying in Class I or II are very irregular in attending classes. The pattern of irregularity in attendance of children was more serious in Dhauladevi while it was quite satisfactory in most of the schools of Syalde. In most of the schools of Kapkot, Dwarahat and Garur blocks we found glaring discrepancies between the attendance figures as per the attendance register for the day and actual physical count of students physically present in the classes on that day. Many students whose attendance had been affirmed in the records were not physically present in the class room. We also found that in some schools the practice of taking regular attendance is not followed. Attendance was generally marked not daily but after an interval of some days for all the preceding days. Invariably all the children were marked present so that absenteeism was virtually nil according to the school records. In one case, we found that attendance had even been marked for Sundays.

As per the school records a majority of children (61 per cent) were found to have attended their school for more than 13 days and another 24 per cent for 11 - 12 days while the attendance of remaining 15 per cent children was below 10 days. Attendance was most satisfactory in some schools in Syalde where around 92 per cent children attended school for

Table 3.7 : Attendance of Children (in days)

No. of Days	Dhauladevi	Kapkot	Syalde	Other Blocks	All Blocks
Less than 5	29 (3.49)	14 (1.48)	3 (0.37)	19 (0.97)	65 (1.43)
6 - 8	92 (11.19)	41 (4.32)	7 (0.87)	94 (4.79)	235 (5.16)
9 - 10	141 (16.97)	86 (9.06)	10 (1.24)	144 (7.83)	381 (8.37)
11 - 12	256 (30.81)	209 (22.02)	49 (6.07)	587 (29.89)	1101 (24.19)
13 - 14	299 (35.98)	354 (37.30)	201 (24.91)	963 (49.03)	1817 (39.93)
15 - 16	13 (1.56)	239 (25.18)	537 (66.54)	145 (7.38)	934 (20.52)
Above 17	-	6 (0.63)	-	12 (0.61)	18 (0.40)
Total Children	831 (100.00)	949 (100.00)	807 (100.00)	1964 (100.00)	4551 (100.00)
Average No. of days School opened in Jan.	14.33	15.17	15.38	14.36	14.80

more than 13 days in January. In Kapkot 62 per cent of the children attended school for more than 13 days during the same period, while in Dhauladevi the corresponding figure was only 37 per cent (Table 3.7).

6. *Pedagogy and Learning Achievements*

Our discussions with the primary school teachers, observation of the teaching-learning situation and spot evaluations of the childrens attitude, understanding and learning achievements gives us the impression that in all the primary schools visited by us the pedagogy followed is the traditional method of rote learning. No attempt is made by the teachers to make use of the childrens inherent curiosity and desire to experiment. The children, instead, are placed in a highly regimented environment and "schooled" to obey the teacher unquestioningly. Inevitably this is justified in the name of discipline.

We also found that most of the schools restrict the teaching-learning process to the classroom. Study at home through regular home work or other assignments is not encouraged. Only seven schools out of the sample of 40 were found to be giving home assignments off and on and not as a regular practice. The only exception was one school each in Syalde and Chaukhutia. The practice of regular checking of answer sheets/test note-books was not followed in most schools. We found that note-books/answer sheets of children were never checked in 9 schools. Only in 8 schools was this done as a matter of course. In the remaining 23 schools the note-books were checked about once in a month or so. The results of failure to carry out regular corrections and

supervision of assignments were clearly seen in the proneness of the students to make the same mistakes in writing especially in the spellings of words and construction of sentence.

Wherever home work and home assignments were given the children were found to be very lackadaisical in completing them, while the teachers did not care to check or correct them. It is therefore hardly surprising that we found a majority of the children had not even attempted such assignments. Possibly part of the responsibility could also be attributed to the indifference of the parents and the lack of a supportive home environment for education. This problem was especially pronounced in the case of girls and of children from SC/ST households.

The performance of children in writing, reading and understanding the lessons was very unsatisfactory in most of the schools. We found that a large number of students who were habitually absent were lagging behind in their studies and no attempt was made to bring them on par with the rest.

In general we found the performance and understanding of the girls to be better than that of the boys. They appeared more alert and keen to answer questions put to them promptly and confidently. Their hand-writing too was better formed than that of the boys. The children from economically poor and socially backward households exhibited decidedly poorer skills in reading and comprehension than the other children.

We did, however, find that teaching-learning materials like text-books, note-books, etc. were readily available with all children. The practice of taking monthly, half-yearly and annual examinations was also followed almost uniformly by all the schools. However, as pointed out above, the problem lay in checking the scripts of the examinations and correcting the mistakes to which the children were prone.

CHAPTER IV

TEACHERS : STRENGTH, TRAINING AND MOTIVATION

1. *Strength and Training.*

Availability of adequate number of qualified and trained teachers is an important precondition for the improvement in the quality of education. It would therefore be useful to examine the situation in Almora district with regard to the availability of teachers and their preparedness, training and motivation for the task of imparting education to the primary school-age children. There are, at present 3709 teachers : 1128 head teachers and 2581 assistant teachers working in 1492 government primary schools in the district. There is a provision to appoint one teacher for every 40 children enrolled with the provision that no school should have less than two teachers even if the strength of students in it is less than 40. We therefore find that there are 232 primary schools where the strength of children is reported to be less than 40 and each school has two teachers. The teacher - student ratio in these primary schools works out to about 1 : 20, compared to about 1 : 33 in the district as a whole.

The teachers appointed for primary schools have to undergo the basic teachers training programme or BTC. The minimum educational qualifications for appointment as primary teachers is intermediate pass with BTC. The teachers training is invariably a pre-induction course lasting for a period of two years. Till recently this was the only training which the teachers received as there was no provision for in-service or refresher courses. Now, however, the responsibility for organising refresher courses and in-service training programmes for the teachers at district level has been given to the newly established District Institute of Educational Training (DIET).

During recent past great emphasis has been placed on increasing the number of women teachers in primary schools. This is considered important for increasing the enrolment of girls at the primary level. Currently around 75 per cent of the position of teachers are reserved for women. In Almora district there are at present 1113 women teachers. In most of the schools that we visited we found at least one woman teacher. In fact in some schools which are well connected by road and those which are located near urban centres there are more female teachers than male teachers. However, primary schools located in remote areas of the district have only male teachers working in them.

As regards the distribution of male and female teachers in the 40 primary schools visited by us we found that 15 per cent of the schools have only women teachers. In another 15

Table 4.1 : Number of Teachers by Sex

Block	Male	Female	Total
Dhauladevi	8 (36.36)	14 (63.64)	22 (100.00)
Kapkot	22 (68.75)	10 (31.25)	32 (100.00)
Syalde	17 (77.27)	5 (22.73)	22 (100.00)
Other Blocks	38 (64.41)	21 (35.59)	59 (100.00)
All Blocks	85 (62.96)	50 (37.04)	135 (100.00)

per cent schools the proportion of women teachers is higher than that of male teachers. About one-third of the schools are manned only by male teachers, and in the remaining schools the proportion of male and female teachers is about the same. Overall the proportion of women teachers is found to be 37 per cent in the primary schools in the district. The concentration of women teachers was mainly in Dhauladevi block where the schools are situated along roadsides and most parts of the block are relatively close to the district headquarter Almora. In this block the proportion of women teachers is 63.64 per cent. In the remaining blocks the proportion of women teachers ranged between 22.73 per cent in Syalde block and 31.25 per cent in Kapkot block to 35.59 per cent in the other blocks.

2. *Motivation of Teachers*

In our investigations we were, frankly speaking, somewhat disappointed by the level of motivation displayed by

the teachers either in bringing more children, especially girls and those belonging to SC/ST households, into the school and retaining them there or in improving the quality of instruction in the classroom. We also found that the teachers do not generally maintain much of a contact with the pupils and their families, especially outside the classroom situation, even though a majority of teachers (65.18 per cent) contacted by us were living in the same village where they were teaching. None of the 135 teachers we talked to reported that their students visited them at home for seeking help with their studies. However, some women teachers were found to be providing tuitions to the children of other (private) schools. Most of the teachers, however, reported that they were engaged in motivating illiterates in the village to read and write as part of the Total Literacy Campaign. We find that some of the teachers were working as master trainers and co-ordinators under the TLC.

Table 4.2 : Place of Residence of Teachers

Block	Within Village	Outside Village	Total
Dhauladevi	18 (81.82)	4 (18.18)	22 (100.00)
Kapkot	19 (59.38)	13 (40.62)	32 (100.00)
Syalde	13 (59.09)	9 (40.91)	22 (100.00)
Other Blocks	38 (64.41)	21 (35.59)	59 (100.00)
All Blocks	88 (65.18)	47 (34.82)	135 (100.00)

3. *The Teaching-Learning Situation*

In most of the schools we visited we found that teaching in a multi-class environment with just two or three teachers and a general shortage of space did pose genuine problems for the teachers. The children of more than one class were found sitting in a single class room which was very inconvenient for teachers especially if two teachers were teaching students simultaneously. In many cases one teacher was found taking his classes outside the classrooms in the open. The problem of over-crowding and managing the children in class rooms becomes more serious during the rainy season.

In almost all the schools we visited we found the teachers using the black-board as the main teaching aid. In fact, it was the only teaching aid being used. Teaching-learning material supplied under operation black-board, though available in the schools was hardly used, or used only sparingly at best. In fact some teachers in Kapkot and Syalde blocks reported that they had not been provided any training on the use of OB materials and so could not use them. Inquiries from the children revealed that in a large number of schools in Kapkot they had not seen these items. On the other hand some teachers from Dhauladevi and Takula blocks reported that the educational aids provided under Operation Blackboard, particularly the maths and science kits, were found to be very useful by them. In general, however, we found most of the teachers following the

traditional rote method in teaching students of all class from I to V. No innovations were to be seen.

We also found during our visit to the schools that the teachers are not in the habit of preparing lesson plans in advance. Teaching on a day to day basis is carried out without such planning. They are at best guided by the instructions provided to them in the form of certain directives issued by the Basic Education Office. In the case of some schools in Syalde and Chaukhutia the teachers were found to be conducting classes on the basis of a time table. None of the teachers was found to be maintaining a diary.

By and large it was observed that the schools have been maintaining a proper register for the attendance of the teachers and that the teachers have generally been regular as far as teaching is concerned. However, it was disturbing to see that in many schools the teachers are irregular as far as the school timings are concerned. This was more prominent in the schools of Garur, Kapkot and Dwarahat where teachers are in the habit of coming late, skipping classes and leaving before the school is over. This irregularity was more pronounced among the female teachers. Yet another problem with female teachers is that of excessive leave. All female teachers desire a posting in schools which are close to the district headquarters or their respective block headquarters. Obviously a major reason for this desire is the difficulty of finding accommodation for a single woman in a village and living alone in an alien environment. In case they are

posted to schools which are located away from their homes they are found to take leave of one nature or another while attempting to get transferred to the school of their choice. Because of this problem many schools are short of teachers though there may be enough teachers in the block and in case a teacher from such a school is genuinely in need of leave, he or she either has to forego the leave or the school does not function during the time he or she is on leave.

CHAPTER V

MANAGEMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

1. District Level Management System

At the district level the system of primary education operated through the Basic Shiksha Parishad Schools - both primary and upper primary - is managed, supervised and controlled through a well organised and developed administrative structure. The Basic Shiksha Adhikari or Basic Education Officer is the nodal officer for management of primary education at the district level. Departmentally he is answerable to the Director Basic Education of the state who is also his controlling authority. Within the district the Basic Shiksha Adhikari has to function under the overall administrative guidance and control of the District Collector who has final responsibility for all programmes in the district.

The Basic Shiksha Adhikari is assisted by a small complement of staff at the district headquarter which includes three Deputy Inspectors and necessary office staff. For exercising supervisory and administrative control over the Parishad Schools, the Basic Shiksha Adhikari is assisted

by Sub-Deputy Inspectors (SDIs) at the block level. According to the prevalent norm one SDI is required to look after 40 schools. In actual practice the number falls short of the requirement. According to the present strength of schools 33 SDIs are needed in 14 blocks, but there are only 23 in position. Their main function is to carry-out periodic inspection of the schools under their charge in order to ensure that the schools are functioning properly and the teaching-learning process is proceeding smoothly. They also exercise administrative and academic control over the primary school teachers. Consequently inspections of schools, which is the main instrument of supervision and control available at present leaves a lot to be desired. At best school inspections take place once a year and that too rather perfunctorily. Schools situated away from main roads are not inspected regularly. Given the nature of the problem, filling up all vacant positions of SDIs, important though it is, would not necessarily solve the problem of exercising effective supervision and control over the primary schools. For this some other solution such as activating Village Education Committees (which at present exist only on paper) or vesting necessary powers in the village level panchayats would have to be thought of. This issue, however, has been discussed in greater detail later.

A number of SDIs were found to be staying at the district headquarter rather than in their respective blocks. This also makes it increasingly difficult for them to monitor

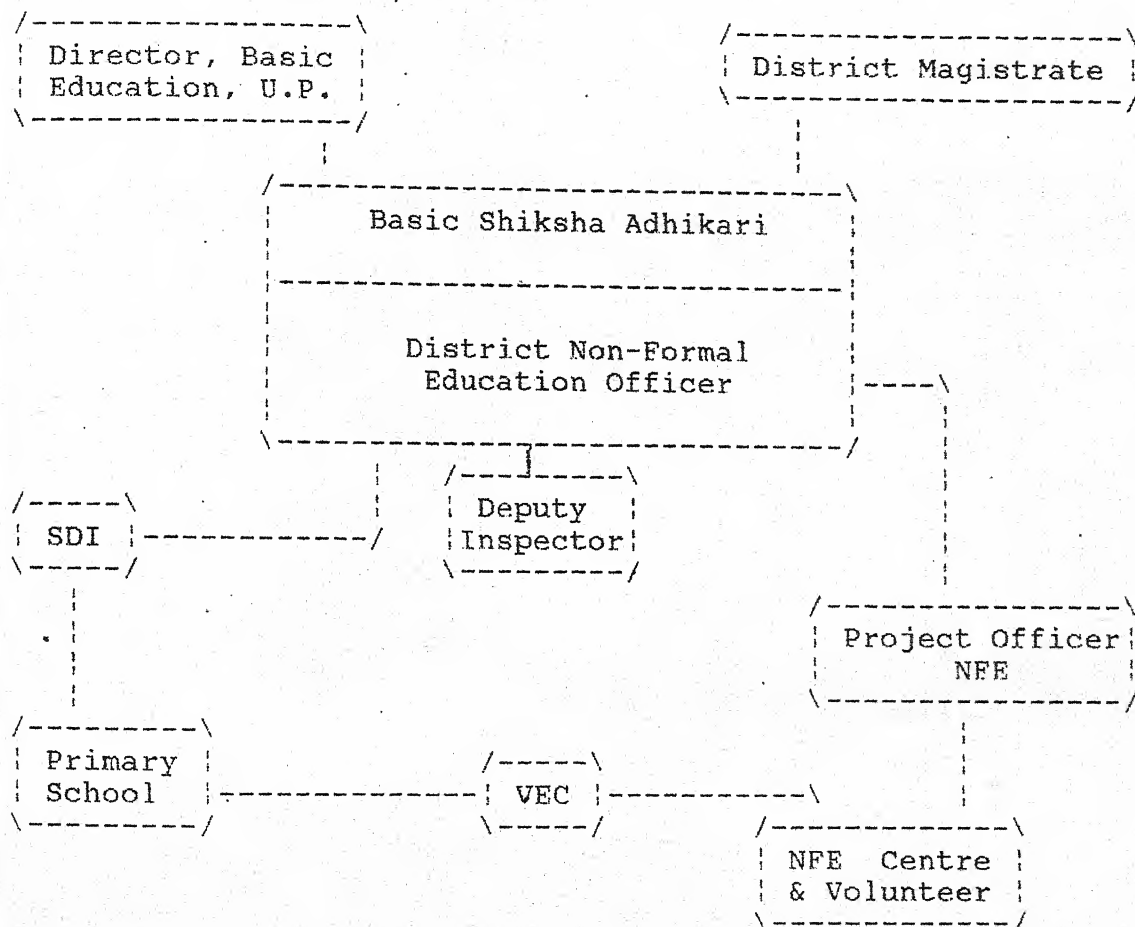
the working of the schools under them particularly those which are in remote areas. Added to this is the fact that they do not have adequate powers to deal with the problems of schools. Many a times they are unable to take action against teachers because of undue pressures. It has often been observed that teachers exert their influence and get themselves transferred to the schools of their choice while other teachers take more leave than is due to them because of their connections. There is also some problem regarding timely payment of travel expenses to the SDIs for their inspection visits. As these payments are delayed for about two years the SDIs too do not show much enthusiasm for undertaking inspection tours of schools.

The Basic Shiksha Adhikari is also the District Non-Formal Education Officer in Almora. In this capacity he oversees the work of NFE projects, each of which has a number of centres run by volunteers at the village/habitation level. At the block level there is a Project Officer, Non-Formal Education who supervises the work of the NFE centres and of the volunteers by convening monthly meetings of volunteers. At present not all blocks in Almora have Non-Formal Education Officers or Projects.

The NFE centres are run by volunteers who are paid an honorarium of Rs.105/- per month for their efforts. Unfortunately for certain reasons the honorarium has not been paid for some time now creating resentment among the

volunteers. This has also affected the working of the centres. The system of supervising and monitoring the work of the NFE centres leaves a lot to be desired as there are a large number of scattered centres spread over a block.

Figure 1 : Organisational Chart of Primary Education Set-Up in Almora



2. Village Education Committees (VECs)

The Village Education Committees have been formed with a view to increasing community involvement in primary

education. It is felt that this will help in increasing participation of people and in building an environment in support of education at the village level leading to higher enrolment and retention and improved achievement levels as well as better (participatory) management of the schools at the community level. The experience with VECs in U.P. has been a mixed one. In most cases they have been dormant bodies which exist only on paper. They seldom meet and when they do they hardly perform any useful role. Our study at the level of selected schools shows that people are hardly enthusiastic about the meetings of the VECs. We also did not find women participating in the VECs. In the meetings of the VECs matters relating to administration, finance and teachers attendance are generally discussed. However, very little discussion takes place on matters concerning enrolment, drop-outs, achievement, improvement in the quality of education, community support for the school system, etc. In a large number of cases the village Pradhan was found to be attending meetings only for the purpose of signing the necessary documents. Meetings of VECs were generally held on special occasions like Independence Day and Republic Day. Out of the 40 schools visited by us we found that in only three schools the meetings of the VECs were being held every month. In another seven schools the meetings were held quarterly, while in 15 schools the meetings were held once every six months. In the remaining 15 schools the meetings of VECs were held either once in nine months or once every year. Not only are

the meetings not held with sufficient frequency but the participation of the people was also not very good or enthusiastic. Participation could be called good in only three schools, while in half the schools it was rather poor (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 : Frequency of Meetings of VEC held During Last Year and the Participation of People

	Dhaura- devi	Syalde	Kapkot	Other Blocks	All Blocks
<u>Frequency of Meetings</u>					
Monthly	1	-	1	1	3
Three Monthly	1	1	3	2	7
Six Monthly	1	3	3	8	15
Nine Monthly	1	2	2	1	6
Yearly or More	2	2	3	2	9
Total Schools	6	8	12	14	40
<u>Participation of People</u>					
Good	1	-	2	-	3
Satisfactory	1	2	6	8	17
Poor	4	6	4	6	20
Total Schools	6	8	12	14	40

In order to facilitate the working of the schools by providing them necessary academic and administrative support the Basic Education Department has identified one primary school for each block as the central school which is linked to lead schools or sub-central schools each of which has attached to it 10-14 primary schools in a given area. The

lead schools are expected to organise monthly meetings to be attended by at least one teacher from each of the schools attached to them. At these meetings common issues like academic problems of the schools, problems with curriculum, teaching, text-books, educational reforms and administrative matters such as leave of the teachers, etc. are to be discussed. In actual practice, however, these meetings have been reduced to a mere formality as the teachers from the different schools do not sit together and discuss their problems. They merely carry the dak from their respective schools which is to be forwarded to the central school of the concerned block.

The government has tried to increase the participation of socially and economically disadvantaged groups by providing scholarships to children belonging to the SC/ST population. These children are provided Rs.144 annually on a half yearly basis. In all those schools where these scholarships are being provided regularly, the enrolment of children belonging to SC/ST families has increased. However, in a number of schools the SC/ST children have not been provided this facility even after the headmaster has recommended the children for the scholarship and has also sent various reminders to the concerned office. Such cases were reported in schools of Syalde. Besides this many schools also reported that scholarships are not received regularly. This was the complaint of the schools in Kapkot, Dwarahat and Syalde. In some schools the children had not

been paid their scholarship since 1992. In other schools the scholarship amount had not been paid for a particular year though payments had been made for the preceding and succeeding years. However, there were some schools in Takula and Dwarahat which had received and distributed the scholarship amount fully upto January 1994. It was also observed that in many schools the SC/ST children have enrolled only to avail the scholarship facility. It was therefore suggested that scholarship should be linked with attendance rather than simply enrolment.

3. *Data Base and MIS*

For the success of the UPE/EFA programme it is imperative that there is a proper and reliable data base on crucial educational parameters like enrolment, drop-outs, retention, stagnation, completion, achievement, etc. and an effective and efficient Management Information System with quick retrieval capability. At present our source of information on the number of children in different age groups is the Bal Ganana Register maintained by each primary school which also has a separate register for actual enrolment of children in various classes. The counter check regarding the children of different age groups is available with the Gram Sabha. In the case of many schools the information in the Bal Ganana Register did not tally with the information at the Gram Sabha.

It is expected that each school will update the Bal Ganana Register on a yearly basis after carrying out a detailed survey in the villages covered by the school. However, this is not done in actual practice and most schools maintain their Bal Ganana Register on the basis of the Census information. Thus they are involved in a practice of approximation rather than relying on correct and actual data. This was quite clear from a comparison of the Bal Ganana and the school enrolment registers, as many names which figured in one register were not found in the other.

It was also observed that in the enrolment register the difference between children in the school-going age-group and those actually enrolled is shown in the column 'studying elsewhere'. This appears to be a residual category used for balancing numbers rather than the result of careful empirical verification. This leads us to believe that the number of non-enrolled children may be actually higher than what is indicated by the data.

In the light of these facts it is essential that the Bal Ganana Register should be properly maintained on a year to year basis and there should also be a proper check regarding the number of non-enrolled children rather than treat them as those studying elsewhere. In fact there is an urgent need to carry out a baseline survey regarding the number of school-going age children, those actually enrolled and those not brought under the fold of the education system. This can

form the subject of a village education survey as part of a micro-planning exercise to be conducted with the association of teachers, VEC, Village Panchayat and the community.

Management Information System (MIS) with easy and quick retrieval of data (preferably computerised) is also urgently needed at the block and district levels. This will go a long way in improving the management capability of the existing administrative set up of the Basic Education Department at the district and block levels. The staff at these levels (especially the BSA and SDIs) also needs to be provided training in management skills with a view to increasing their managerial and supervisory effectiveness and bringing about cost-effective innovations in the system. The SCERT in association with NCERT and NIEPA could undertake this task.

CHAPTER VI

PEOPLES' PERCEPTIONS ON PRIMARY EDUCATION : BLOCK AND VILLAGE LEVEL WORKSHOPS

20.

In order to get a feel of the perceptions of the village community regarding the importance of education, the bottlenecks faced by them in providing education to their children, the draw backs of the present system as well as the ways and means to rectify them, two Workshops, each of one day, were organised at Kapkot and Naini. The Workshop at Kapkot was a block level one and the participants included the Block Pramukh, village Pradhans, the BDO and other block officials, teachers and a number of people belonging to different villages of the block. The one organised at Naini, located in Dhauladevi block, was a village Panchayat level Workshop in which the participants were village Pradhans, teachers and members of the village community.

The Workshop at Kapkot was attended by over 80 persons and of these about one-fourth were women, which was a very heartening sign, while in Naini about 50 persons attended with only a few women participating. Both the Workshops were attended by the Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Almora and his staff

including a core group of SDIs, Project Officer, Education, UNICEF, Lucknow and the Director and members of the research team of Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow.

The format for both the Workshops was more or less similar. After the initial formalities of welcome, the purpose of the Workshop was explained to the participants by the Basic Shiksha Adhikari and his team members, Shri Kamaluddin, Project Officer Education, UNICEF, Lucknow dwelt on the role of UNICEF in promotion of basic education in general and in the Almora District Education Project in particular. Thereafter the Director, Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow explained the format of the Workshop which included formation of four groups to deliberate upon and make recommendations on a specific set of issues identified for each group, presentation of the recommendations at the final plenary session followed by a brief discussion on the recommendations. Each group was asked to select its coordinator and rapporteur. Maximum time was given to group discussions so that the participation of the largest number of persons could be ensured. Keeping in mind the enthusiasm and seriousness shown by the people, we can claim that both the workshops were highly successful. They also threw up an interesting set of recommendations.

The issues on which the four groups were asked to deliberate and make their recommendations were as follows:

1. *Education General*

- enrolment at right age : 6 years of age for both girls and boys;
- regular attendance;
- a minimum 5 years of schooling;
- completion with learning achievements;
- girls education.

2. *School Facilities*

- a time, a place, a teacher and learners : concept of school;
- use of para-professional teachers to strengthen teaching/learning process;
- use of existing buildings;
- double shift schools;
- community initiatives in creating access and improving facilities;
- use of JRY funds for augmenting facilities : low cost class-rooms, toilet and water facilities.

3. *Teacher Related*

- teachers attendance/motivation;
- teachers relation with students;
- communities relation with teachers;
- community support to female teachers;
- community expectations from a good teacher.

4. Management Related

- role of Panchayats in education;
- the role of VECs in planning and management of basic education;
- coverage and impact of incentive schemes;
- effectiveness of the existing supervision/inspection /monitoring system;
- role of NGOs in promotion of basic education;
- preparation and use of Bal Ganana Register;
- adequacy of grants to schools, augmenting government grants with community contributions;
- generation of local resources;
- intra and inter departmental coordination.

The recommendations made by the various groups in Kapkot are presented below:

Group I

1. Keeping in view the problems of the hills especially those of terrain and topography the non-governmental organisations should be encouraged to set up Balwadis in those areas which are not served by primary schools, and in habitations, which are not easily accessible and from where children find it difficult to go to school. The local people should bear the cost of teachers salary. In the event that any NGO is not available the community should find an educated boy/girl from the area and appoint him/her to provide education to the children.

2. In order to ensure regular attendance of the children and of the teachers there should be monthly parent-teacher meetings where the teachers and parents can discuss and sort out their problems.
3. The solution to reducing the drop-out rate may be found in providing a more attractive curriculum, facilities of games and cultural activities in the school. Once these facilities are made available, the children are likely to be attracted to school. There is also the need to pay greater attention to those students who are weak. Greater encouragement to them will provide better incentive for working harder. In case they fail they get disheartened and drop-out of school.
4. The parents initially get their daughters enroled in the school but the need to help in household chores prevents them from attending classes regularly and many even drop-out. In order to improve this situation the parents have to be educated and properly motivated to give equal importance to girls education, so that a girl once admitted also goes to school regularly and remains in school for the full five years. The girls belonging to the weaker sections should be provided incentives such as scholarships, free school uniforms and school text-books.

Twenty persons took part in the deliberations of this group.

Group II

1. This group was unanimous in its view that a school was to be conceived a place where the teachers teach the students according to a given schedule and that too in an atmosphere of coordination between the teachers and the students on the one hand and between the teachers and parents on the other. Simply the presence of a school building does not constitute a school.
2. In order to strengthen teaching in primary schools and to serve remote areas the government may consider appointing para-teachers by providing them a reasonable stipend. Provision for absorbing the efficient teachers on a regular scale after a period of five years, could be made as a measure of incentive to the para-teachers.
3. The school buildings are being fully utilized. In fact, most schools are in need of additional rooms so as to have a separate room for each class. No need was felt to introduce two shifts in the schools in the hills because of the climate and terrain constraints.
4. Parent-teacher associations should be set up and they should function actively. They can regularly discuss the problems faced by the teachers as well as the students and suitable ways can then be chalked out to overcome them.
5. In order to reduce the cost of construction the people can be requested to render social service by providing

manual labour under the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana in the construction of school buildings. The parents can also be persuaded to come forward with financial contributions which would meet the cost of construction partly.

There were fifteen persons in the group.

Group III

1. In order to ensure regular attendance of teachers, as far as possible local teachers should be appointed as experience shows that it is people from outside the hill region who are the biggest defaulters. They abstain from teaching by putting in leave application on medical and other grounds. Many use their influence to get themselves transferred to the areas of their choice.
2. In order to ensure greater commitment from the teachers Workshops should be organised on a regular basis for them. These Workshops can bring about a radical change in their attitude and outlook. Moreover there should be suitable incentives for the good teachers and punishment for those who take teaching indifferently.
3. For maintaining a feeling of warmth and trust between the students and teachers, the latter should handle the children with care and after understanding their psychology. They should impart education with greater

interest and ensure the all round development of the children.

4. At present the experience of the relation between teachers and the society is a mixed one. In some areas this relationship is cordial while in others it borders on the hostile. The teachers must appreciate the fact that they have adopted a very noble profession and if they are performing their duties properly they will automatically gain the confidence and respect of the people. The teachers along with the staff of the education department should make an earnest endeavour to educate the illiterate people such that they can be made to realise the significance of education.
5. Special attention should be paid to the children enrolled in Class I in primary schools. Proper education at this stage would form a solid foundation for the years to come. At present most schools being two teacher schools greater emphasis is given to the teaching of classes IV and V.

Seventeen persons took part in the discussion of this group.

Group IV

1. At present parents are not aware of the importance of education since the Village Education Committees are not functional. Consequently they are indifferent towards

the quality of education, regularity of their children and even drop-outs. Currently, even the Panchayats are not playing an active role. Thus there is an urgent need to activate the Village Education Committee.

2. The headmaster of the primary school and the village Pradhan should work together for ensuring the proper functioning of the schools.
3. The village Pradhan should have an open discussion with the village community where problems relating to education and the primary school should be highlighted and efforts made to overcome them.
4. The VEC should be constituted by the elders and educated persons of the village rather than under the Chairmanship of the village Pradhan. The VEC should be empowered to ensure regular attendance by the teachers. The committee should be given the right to present its proposals at the district level so that action may be taken on them.
5. As far as the monitoring and inspection of schools is concerned, it was felt that the current system of inspection is not effective because the SDIs do not find sufficient time to inspect the schools regularly. Whenever the SDI visits a school for inspection the concerned VEC should be informed in advance.

6. Funds which are being provided at present for the development of education are not sufficient considering the problems of the hills. There is, therefore, a need to increase the financial resources for the hills.

The overall response of the people towards the workshop was very encouraging, even overwhelming. This was apparent from the fact that they attended the workshop from the time it begun and till it was over. They were seen to participate actively in their respective groups and even offered their suggestions at the concluding plenary session at the time of presentation of reports by the different groups.

The workshop in Naini, which was held at the Village Panchayat level, had a relatively fewer number of participants, particularly from amongst village Pradhans. However, even then there were around 50 to 60 persons who attended the workshop. As compared to the block level workshop at Kapkot there were fewer women at Naini. Nevertheless, the participants were equally enthusiastic and took active part in the group deliberations.

The recommendations and suggestions which emerged during the workshop from the various groups are being presented below:

Group I

1. There was a strong need to introduce a pre-primary education system whereby children are provided education

for 2 to 3 hours daily prior to being admitted to primary schools. For this the educated girls of the area could be selected, trained and appointed. To make learning attractive to children maximum use of audio-visual aids should be made at the pre-primary level. Play materials should also be provided to such schools.

2. The primary schools should provide a balanced diet to the children, ensure good children-friendly behaviour from the teachers, use attractive ways of imparting education and also provide free text-books and other materials to the needy children.
3. The village Education Committee should be properly motivated by making its members aware of their role in ensuring quality of education. This will ensure enrolment of all children of school-going age.
4. After completing primary education a child is expected to be able to read and write with comprehension. Besides this the child should also be conversant with his culture and religion and develop feelings of patriotism.
5. As far as the girl child is concerned, she is socialised from a very early age into the role of a house wife and mother. As a result her studies remain neglected. She can be provided education only if she is relieved of her household responsibilities and this can be achieved only

when the parents are convinced about the significance of education.

6. Keeping in mind the geographical and climatic situation of the hills school timings should from 8 AM to 12 Noon during summer and 9 AM to 3 PM during winter.

Of the four groups constituted, this was the smallest and had only six members.

Group II

1. A school does not imply merely a school building. There has to be proper co-ordination between the school building, teachers and students. Moreover, the school should also be held in high esteem by the parents, teachers and children. Thus regular teaching and proper atmosphere is as much a part of the school as buildings and teachers.
2. The appointment of para teachers could strengthen the education system but they should be provided a salary of Rs.1000/- per month since even a daily labourer earns Rs.30/= per day. Their performance should be regularly evaluated by the headmaster and the VEC.
3. The school buildings are being put to optimal use at present. In fact the number of rooms are not sufficient considering that five classes are held simultaneously. Similarly, even the number of teachers is insufficient. Moreover, since the number of school going children is

not very large there is no need to have two shifts in the schools.

4. There is a need to improve the overall environment of the schools and this can be done by providing furniture for the teachers, tat-patties for children, toilets, facilities for drinking water and games. In this regard the funds available under JRY could be tapped and additional help in the form of money, labour and materials can be taken from the community.
5. The village community should be made aware of the government programmes in the field of education. If they are regularly informed about them and are encouraged to participate in them they will be able to identify themselves with these activities and will take greater interest in their successful implementation.

Twenty-two members took part in the deliberations of this group.

Group III

1. As far as possible teachers should be appointed to schools of their choice, so that they will be motivated to concentrate on teaching rather than the preoccupied with family and other personal problems.
2. To ensure better coordination between teachers and students, the teachers should maintain contact with the

parents and there should be weekly meetings in the schools between parents and teachers.

3. The women teachers were not getting the full cooperation of the village community. There was need to improve the situation. Reservation for women teachers which is 75 per cent at present should be reduced to 50 per cent.

There were ten members in this group.

Group IV

1. Panchayats have hardly shown any concern for education. Its members are interested mainly in promoting their self-interest. The panchayats should be made active so that they can in turn motivate the parents. They should have monthly meetings with the teachers.
2. Out of the money which the village panchayats receive from government for various activities 10 per cent should be kept aside for educational activities.
3. The Village Education Committee is at present quite inactive. Part of the reason may be that many of its members are themselves uneducated. It should, therefore be, ensured that only educated people who can contribute to improving the quality of education imparted by the schools should be made its members.
4. The headmasters of the schools should have some funds at their disposal which they can use for meeting the urgent requirements of the schools.

5. The availability of funds for scholarships, free textbooks, etc. is highly inadequate even for the children of SC/ST families. Wherever these facilities are available they have yielded good results. They should therefore be extended.
6. The current system of school inspection is more of a formality. There is a need to have greater trust and cooperation between teachers and SDIs. School inspections should be carried out once every month when the teachers should be asked to give their suggestions. The teachers should be made aware of their duties and responsibilities.
7. There were hardly any NGOs active in the field of education in the area. Even the existing organisations are playing only a nominal role.
8. For Bal Ganana Register exact information could be collected with the help of the village panchayats. The Bal Ganana should be carried out on a six monthly basis.
9. Resources for primary education are insufficient. The community should also contribute something by way of donations. In areas where there is no school building, someone with extra accommodation may provide one or two rooms in which the school can function till it can have its own building.

STATISTICAL PROFILE
Almora District and Uttar Pradesh

	Almora District	Uttar Pradesh
1. Area (Sq. kms.)	5385	294411
2. <u>Administrative Structure</u>		
a) Tehsils	4	294
b) Development Blocks	14	897
c) Villages	3003	112539
d) Gram Sabhas	1360	73194
e) Nyaya Panchayats	130	8814
3. <u>Demography</u>		
a) Population	836617	139112287
Male	400900	74036957
Female	435717	65075330
b) Sex Ratio (Female per thousand males)	1086	897
c) 1981-91 population growth rate	10.57	25.16
d) Density of population	155	473
4. <u>Literacy Rate (%)</u>		
Male	79.96	55.73
Female	39.60	25.31
Total	58.66	41.60
5. Scheduled caste population (%)	16.70	21.05
6. Scheduled tribes population(%)	3.54	0.21
7. Number of schools (1991-92)		
a) Primary Schools (1492)*	1539	76734
b) Upper Primary Schools	232	14687

8. Enrolment

a) Primary Schools :

Boys	(63930)*	95855	9274950
Girls	(58727)*	68657	5545714
Total	(122657)*	164512	14820664

b) Upper Primary Schools :

Boys	11736	2534684
Girls	6901	963342
Total	18637	3498026

9. Number of Teachers

a) Primary Schools :

Male	2640	216051
Female	1113	48662
Total	(3709)*	3753
		264713

b) Upper Primary Schools :

Male	924	76558
Female	109	18768
Total	1033	95326

10. Student - Teacher Ratio

a) Primary	1 : 44	1 : 56
b) Upper Primary	1 : 18	1 : 37

Source : (i) Statistical Diary, State Planning Institute, U.P., 1993

(ii) State Plan of Action for EFA, U. P., Department of Education, Government of U.P., 1993.

* According to data provided by Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Almora, 1993.